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WILFRED WELLOCK on Conscience and Conscription

COUNTLESS thousands of people are being harassed by the task of steering their lives through a perfect maze of restrictive barriers and compulsions. At every cross road they encounter a bewildering array of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." They can no longer call their lives their own.

This process of imprisoning the individual and destroying the national soul, is a proof of moral failure, of the disintegration of the social mind. If it were really believed that war is an instrument of social salvation, a morally awakened nation would not need to be conscripted into it.

But total war coincides with a robotized civilization, and moves an ignorant and bewildered population like pieces on a chess board. Economic breakdown is but the counterpart of moral and spiritual disintegration.

The average person, who, of course, has accepted the necessity of this war, is in a hopeless position. He knows that in present-day conditions total war involves ever-increasing submission of the individual to the State. He thus submits to each humiliating demand upon his liberty on the loudly proclaimed pretext that he is thereby defending his liberty. As every care has been taken to prevent him from thinking, he does not know that power which is sought as a means to an end always tends to be-

come an end in itself, or that a war which has sprung from world economic breakdown is likely to be followed steering their lives through a perfect by an even more catastrophic breakdown, and thus a social upheaval in which the repressions of war will become the normal condition of peace. He thus becomes the embodiment of contradictions which render him dumb.

THE pacifist breaks into this totalitarian order at two points. He claims the right to do certain things and to abstain from doing others. That this challenge of conscience should be held up to society as unpatriotic, the height of audacity, and self-righteousness, but reveals the degree of moral depravity to which society has sunk.

The pacifist is unable to take human life, but he may also have the conviction that he ought, even at the cost of sacrifice and suffering, to render a particular service to the community. The latter might be de-

scribed as a functional conscience, and is perhaps the highest order of conscience.

But the way of the pacifist, especially in a totalitarian age, is a most difficult one, while completely logical and consistent action is out of the question. That is why conscientious objectors are always asking for guidance of the pacifist organizations with which they are connected.

Yet guidance is not easy to give, mainly for the reason that in a time of crisis, when a person is called upon to make a vital decision and to support that decision by action which may subject him to severe persecution, he can only go as far as his own thinking and his clear convictions will carry him. Resolutions passed at meetings which at the time seemed convincing will, if not rooted in deep understanding, tend to assume the form of grim spectres devoid of the glow and promise of life, in the moment of crisis and isolation.

EVERY decision of conscience must be an expression of the synthesis of the mind which makes it; no man can hand over the making of his mental synthesis, any more than he can his personality to another. The best guidance one can give to another in such circumstances is that of helping him to discover himself, his soul, the spiritual foundations of his being.

It follows from this that no specific line of action can be laid down for conscientious objectors as a body in any crisis, and any attempt to do so will end in disaster and in spiritual casualties. We want the maximum of heroic action, but we want the fewest possible casualties. In schools of true spiritual culture and not in psychological hospitals must be our hope and our assurance of final victory.

In regard to all conscription, military or industrial, diversity of action is inevitable once the first hurdle, that of refusing to take human life, has been taken. The moment we face the issue of whether or not we are going to assist the Government to carry on the war, the fog begins to gather, and if that be our line of approach to the problem, the fog will thicken the farther we go.

Most pacifists would say, or would like to say, that they will decline to make munitions of any kind. But immediately they do so they are confronted with conditions which make it impossible to know whether or not one, and almost everyone, is making munitions.

Every miner produces coal and every blastfurnaceman iron, some of which will be used for munitions. What, therefore, is the pacifist miner and blastfurnaceman to do? Similarly, how is the spinner and the weaver to know whether the cloth they produce will be used by the fighting services, for civil purposes, or for export wherewith to pay for munitions?

IN the House of Commons on April 2, Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, gave this definition of war work in a country that is engaged in total war: "It is anything that is essential to the life of the community in the prosecution of the war."

Therefore, as the deliberate aim of the Government is to eliminate from the life of the nation every scrap of industry that is not contributing to the prosecution of the war, one enters a blinding fog the moment one begins to argue about the merits of

(Continued on back page.)

Commentary

Blow to Mood of Complacency

Edited by "Observer"

THE national mood of complacency has received some severe blows; the worst of which, probably, in its effect upon public confidence, has been the retreat of the British forces from their recent conquests in Libya and the sudden renewal of the retreat to Egypt in a more serious form. That was quite unexpected. How indeed could it have been expected, when the public was continually assured that our naval command of the Mediterranean was complete? By a stroke of dramatic irony, it even appears that the victory of Matapan, which was reported to clinch our command of the Middle Sea, served as a screen behind which the German forces in Libya were decisively reinforced.

"Victories over a third-rate opponent had given us all", says *The Times* (April 15), "perhaps the Army included, over-confidence in our ability to deal with the German armoured formations which had crossed the Mediterranean and a false impression that our sea and air power would prevent them from attaining anything like their present evident strength and would deny them supplies."

That is all very well. But the mood of over-confidence was deliberately fostered by those whose duty it was to know better. The truth has been that the situation was precarious in the extreme. The Germans, not the Italians, are now in Egypt; Turkey shows no sign of entering the war; the "Yugoslav armies have undoubtedly been broken up by the deep German thrusts" (*The Times*, April 15); and the British-Greek forces "have taken up new positions"—a phrase too familiar.

"L. G." Speaks Out

EQUALLY serious in its effect upon public confidence, though upon fewer minds, is the post factum rectification of the figures of our recent shipping losses, on which I give the comment of the *Daily Mail* below. Yet it is only Mr. Lloyd George who has had the courage to arraign the Government. He returns to the charge in an outspoken interview in *Reynolds* (April 13). "At this rate, the nation will head for starvation"—"at this rate" meaning "with the present combination of a camouflaged shipping situation and a half-hearted policy of home food-growing." Mr. Lloyd George maintains that it is our reactionary land-ownership which stands in the way of cultivation of our waste lands. "These reaction-

NEARING THE SECOND THOUSAND

AGAIN the Fighting Fund comes up to expectations. The week's contributions amount to £53 10s. 7d., making the total £1,754 11s.

This brings us into the last quarter of the second thousand. Let us resolve to reach the £2,000 mark in five weeks more: that is by May 23. Please do your utmost.

I am also asked to acknowledge here the receipt of £5 from an anonymous contributor in Bradford.

The Editor

Please make all cheques, P.O.s and money orders payable to Peace News Ltd and crossed "a/c Payee", and address them to the Accountant, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Road, London, N.4.

Thoughts on the Budget

It is calculated that under the new Budget, in order to have a net income of £5000 a year you will need a gross income of £66000 a year. Probably not many readers of this journal are in that position; and perhaps some of them would regard it as an enviable one. If they reflect a little, they will probably revise their judgment, for almost certainly the man who has a gross income of £66000 has inescapable commitments far in excess of £5000 a year. Had he been accustomed to live at the rate of £5000 a year he would have been regarded as an unsocial miser. The reduction of his income to that figure will involve him in the necessity of appearing to behave shabbily and ungenerously to a host of dependents.

The purpose of these simple reflections is not to defend the riches of the rich man; but to draw attention to the immense social changes which our war-taxation cannot fail to engender. The most significant element of that change is not the spectacular levelling-down of the rich man's riches, but the virtual extinction of the middle-class. The man of £600 or £700 a year with three or four children is now worse off economically than the working-man with the same sized family. He will be trying to keep his children at school till the age of 18 or 19; whereas the working man's children go out to work and receive a wage which would have seemed staggering a few years ago. The net income of such a working-class household is definitely greater than that of the middle-class household.

This social upheaval—for it is nothing less—is assuredly not a subject for complaint; but it should be a subject for interested speculation. It is going to make havoc of the accepted Left theory of the class-war. The working-class and the professional middle-class are changing places; and the idea that the dynamic of social revolution will come from the Trade Unions no longer corresponds with the social reality. That is not to imply that the deposed middle-class will

supply the missing dynamic of violent revolution. We know what a violent middle-class revolution is; it is, in the most general sense of the word, Fascist. And there will be no room for a Fascist revolution in Britain. The country will already have gone, quite "democratically," as far as is practically possible in that direction.

That does not mean that there may not be revolutionary upheavals; or that, if the present National Government is severely discredited, there may not be a dictatorial movement of some kind. But it will be a change of mere machinery. The substantial class-structure of our society is being reshaped towards equality now, and reshaped in a way which will permit of little variation. The Communists themselves will have nothing better to offer. For sooner or later the present changes must involve the abolition of class-education. The impoverished middle-class and the working-class will at least make common cause in opposing the continuation of the public-school system, from which both alike will be shut out. Furthermore, there will be a steady lessening of the distinction in status between manual and professional skill.

It is at this point that the potentialities of a new kind of social revolution emerge. The most conscious of the working-class and the middle-class will be able to combine in an effort towards the establishment of new values in a new life of co-operation and mutual respect. To bring into being, by faith and experiment, the pattern of this co-operative culture is, we believe, the positive task with which the Pacifist movement is charged. For this new co-operative society and culture will have peace in its very substance. Its rivalries will be in contribution to the common good and the commonwealth, not in pursuit of individual advantage. The necessities of total war are creating a situation in which the contagion of such a movement, providing it has taken concrete form, may spread like wildfire.

A PACIFIST COMMENTARY

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aries would rather run the risk of starvation — which means defeat — than surrender their privileges on the land." The revolutionary temper of Mr. Lloyd George's recent utterances is very notable.

One point he makes again, as he made it in the Commons, where no reply was given him. For what purpose are we building up a huge army of 4½ million men at home? The Americans have been assured that we have no need of their man-power. Therefore, our army cannot be intended for use on the Continent, for without the addition of American man-power a Continental campaign is unthinkable. What, then, are they for?

Shipping Losses

SOME weeks ago we drew attention to the manner of presenting our shipping losses to the public, involving, as it did, a false raising of hopes by the loud announcement of a "low" figure which would subsequently be quietly amended by an unobtrusive sentence tacked on to the announcement of figures relating to a later week. Now the Daily Mail has taken up the matter, and this is what it said in a leading article on April 9:

The latest total of shipping losses amounts to 77,000 tons. This is bad, but not so bad as the news that the original figure for March 16 was wrong, and has now had to be more than doubled.

It was reported that 71,000 tons had been lost in that week. This followed successive losses of 148,000 tons and 98,000 tons, and the effect was to show a steady decrease. But the 71,000 tons rose to 94,000 tons and have now become 146,000 tons, a total well described as "more ominous."

These ships were probably sunk by the German surface raiders who were at work in the Atlantic about that time. If the Admiralty had any idea that vessels had been lost they should have said so. To make an announcement a fortnight late is most unsatisfactory. It is not the way to maintain public confidence.

Radio-Vichy Calling

ON Easter Sunday I spent a memorable hour listening to Radio-Vichy. It made a deep impression upon me, for it was of a totally different quality from any other broadcast I have listened to for months. There was no propaganda! The news was brief, lucid, and dispassionate: the junction of the German and Italian forces in Albania; the signature of the pact between Russia and Japan. Then an account of how Marshal Pétain attended Mass at a country church twenty miles from Vichy, where the curé did not recognize him. Then it described how two French ex-prisoners of war—both rankers—lunched with him on his return to Vichy.

But this, you may say, was propaganda—propaganda for Pétain as father of his country—propaganda for a conception of the country as one without class-distinction. Well, that is not how it struck me. It seemed to me strangely genuine, strangely pure: propaganda for a truth, with an unmistakable religious quality about it. The voice of a nation which has passed through a spiritual ordeal and found salvation.

Enheartening Listening

AN item I particularly enjoyed was a conversation among the chiefs of the "variety" section of Radio-Vichy in which they spoke of their various professional friends who were prisoners of war in Germany. These friends were mainly "chansonniers": cabaret-singers who write the songs they sing. Here again the effect of intimacy was remarkable. If it was a technical achievement, it was one that the BBC cannot rival. After each "chansonnier" prisoner had been described in this eager conversation between his friends, one or two of his songs were given.

Two of these were first-class: Tristan Richépin's "Le Petit Train Départemental"—just a song about a little country railway-train meandering its 12 miles an hour through the French countryside—the other (by Jean Colijn, I think, but I may have failed to catch the name) extraordinarily clever, about a French policeman on point-duty. Both aroused in me a painful nostalgia for France—the country of civilization par excellence—and an equally painful sense of the

unworthiness of our behaviour toward her. Yet the whole experience heartened me greatly; and I earnestly advise those of my readers who are at ease with the French language to listen in to Radio-Vichy. They will cease, while they listen, to despair of humanity, or of Europe.

A New Epoch

IT set me thinking again that the capitulation of France was the end of an epoch of European history. No doubt it was almost inconceivable that the British Government should recognize the fact and act accordingly. Nevertheless, it was our duty to stand by France in defeat: to stand by France as she actually was, not an imaginary France which was merely to be the instrument of our purposes. The difference between true love and false love is that true love is disinterested and seeketh not his own, whereas false love seeks its own. And that has been our attitude to France.

It was our duty, when she collapsed, to declare our readiness to enter upon negotiations for a general peace in order that her burden might be lightened. We should have saved her much, and we should have cemented a friendship of the spirit with her that would have been unbreakable. Instead, we treated her as merely instrumental to our purposes, which we falsely declared to be hers, and embarked upon a career of self-delusion. Hypnotized by the mirage of overthrowing German military power in Europe, we succumbed to a false scale of values. We would liberate Europe by trying to starve her. We perverted negatives into positives. We persuaded ourselves that to have prevented Germany from invading Britain was a "defeat" for Germany, and quite forgot that Germany inflicted far more signal defeats of this kind upon us in the last war; yet she was defeated in the end.

Battle of the Atlantic

THIS false scale of values vitiates all our thinking and incapacitates us from taking a steady or a long view of things. The morale of the moment is all that matters to the Government or to the press, and in meeting current demands, it is spend-thrift of future confidence. On April 9, in the Commons, Mr. Churchill changed his tune completely from that of a fortnight before.

But when all is said and done, the only way by which we can get through the year 1942 without a very sensible contraction of our war-effort is by another gigantic building of merchant ships in the United States similar to that prodigy of output accomplished by the Americans in 1918.

those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world or who are striving to make themselves persons of consideration in society. Every great and original writer must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen. But for those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of them, or talk about them to take up an opinion of them—for this multitude of unhappy and misguided and misguiding beings an entire regeneration must be produced.

I doubt not that you share with me an invincible confidence that my writings, and among them these little poems, will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found; and that they will in their degree be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier. . . . Let the poet first consult his own heart, as I have done, and leave the rest to posterity. . . . Every great poet is a teacher; I wish either to be considered as a teacher or nothing.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

I have quoted this letter to show the something more than stoic calm with which such a writer could face contumely and neglect by the public and remain confident in a prophetic assurance that his feeling-interpreted of man and nature would bring light into moral darkness. Actually the little book marked the watershed in English literature between abstractions and the perception of the wholeness of nature and man in his pilgrimage and discipline through suffering "to do rightly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God."

The expectation of having some pacifist slogan or statement which will at last make the great divide between right-minded and wrong-minded men and eventually drive Leviathan through the right nolling-booth and lobby must inevitably lead to those popular opportunisms which have led the Labour Party so soon to applaud what they once denounced. The discipline of failure, of being in a perhaps permanent minority, of accepting the Franciscan role of "Brothers Minor" in this world-struggle for social or political power, all this supposes a "straight gate" and a narrow path in the ascent of man from mass to mind, from mind to heart, and from heart to will.

(To be concluded)

The first thing to be said about this is that it is in open contradiction to the confidence which Mr. Churchill expressed before, that the battle of the Atlantic would be won in six months. Secondly, the situations of 1918 and 1942 are vastly different. There is no reason at all to suppose that the German productive machine is running down. The mere building of vast quantities of merchant-shipping will not suffice to win the battle of the Atlantic, because the German powers of destruction will also increase. The Germans will not be marking time between now and 1942. So the real point of Mr. Churchill's speech was the undisguised appeal to the USA to become an active belligerent in the battle of the Atlantic. Probably, she will.

"On the Track"?

BUT what then? "Once we have gained the battle of the Atlantic," Mr. Churchill concluded, "and are we certain of the constant flow of American supplies which is being prepared for us, then it is sure that, 'armed with the sword of retributive justice, we shall be on his (Hitler's) track.'" With all respect, and due recognition of the fact that these words were received with loud and prolonged cheers, we must pronounce them rhetoric. What do they mean? If they mean anything positive at all, it must be that not merely unlimited supplies, but millions and millions of American soldiers must have unhindered passage across the Atlantic.

The new "Scrutator" in the Sunday Times (April 13) who at least asks the pertinent question: "With what hounds shall we hunt him down?", because he realizes that "the sword of retributive justice" is an inadequate instrument for the purpose, suggests that an overwhelming force of bombing aircraft will do the job. I leave it to the experts; but my own humble opinion is that all the evidence of this war goes to show that air-attack alone is never decisive. Air attack is decisive only in conjunction with land forces. By the time that the requisite 10 millions of American troops have been safely transported across the Atlantic, much will have happened. Perhaps the British nation will have become more sceptical of rhetoric.

Social Revolution

BUT it seems we are at a point where argument is futile. We must let determined things to destiny hold unbewailed their way.

The British determination is to hang on and hope for the miracle. And that has this at least in its favour, that it makes a profound and irrevocable social revolution quite inevitable. By spending itself to the utmost in pursuit of the mirage of final victory, Britain will endure all that historical necessity demands that she shall endure, and will deliver herself as a society wholly into the melting-pot.

We pacifists could wish that the driving forces had been utterly different from what they are; but no mental detachment, no spiritual alienation, can prevent us from being as completely involved in this process of revolutionary change as our fellow-citizens. The difference is that we can welcome many changes which others find intolerable: such as the breaking down of class distinction, the diminution of luxury, and the coming of the English earth into its rightful place in the scheme of things.

The Futility of Force

THE experience of the last 25 years confirms the lesson of history. If we sow the dragon's teeth of war, we must expect to reap a harvest of destruction. For force has failed utterly as a means of settling disputes.

America entered the last war to make the world safe for democracy. We did not succeed. The world has never been cursed with more staggering pressure of dictatorship than it is today.

We entered the last war to liberate small nations and to establish the principle of self-determination. We did not succeed. Small nations have never been more cruelly enslaved and more ruthlessly crushed than they are at the present time in Europe.

We entered the last war to safeguard civil liberties. We did not succeed. We have not yet erased from our statute books the laws we passed in 1917 limiting freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly.

We entered the last war in the belief that it was to be a war to end war. We did not succeed. Instead of ending war, we incited wars more vast, more violent, and more destructive than any of which we have record.

War never ends war; evil never ends evil; hate never ends hate; fire plus fire equals ashes; force plus force equals destruction. War plus war equals death.

This is the lesson of history.

From a speech by Rabbi Sidney Goldstein at the 17th Anniversary of the American War Resisters League in New York, Feb. 6, 1941.

Old Lamps for New — 2

CONCLUDING the first part of his article last week, George Davies wrote:

The thought of the popular politician and of the lonely philosopher differ in their judgment of public opinion only in the fact that the one mounts Leviathan and the other renounces him.

But pacifists should ask themselves whether they also look to Leviathan, the elephant in the circus, or to the little life in the poor street, or the little leaven in the poor Church, or the "little flock" to which anything may seem less likely than that they should "receive a kingdom."

It is at least certain that our moral precepts cannot become valid for the crowd until they have become vital and valid to the individual. We cannot become whole-hoggers for peace, to be made by the nation, until we have reflected upon the conditions and difficulties of peace-making and of being "made whole" in our small personalities and groups. And thinking straightly is only one part of the process.

PROBLEM OF WORLDLINESS

It is sometimes a help to turn away from mass politics and its public opinion, to see the problem of worldliness through the eyes of a man of letters or a poet. Today it is difficult not to smile at the thought of Wordsworth as a suspect Fifth Columnist. Had he not been to France, had he not supported the revolution and even hoped for a French victory over Britain? Had he not hob-nobbed with Godwin and his schemes for political justice?

The Times, last year, published a Home Office Agent's report in 1797 upon the Wordsworths and Coleridge, then living in the seclusion of the Quantocks. "I think it will turn out to be no French affair but a mischievous gang of disaffected Englishmen."

A Bath physician reported to the Home Office:

They have contrived to get possession of a mansion house at Alfoxden. The master of the house has no wife with him but only a woman who passes for his sister. The man has camp stools which he and his

visitors take with them on their nocturnal or diurnal excursions and have also a portfolio on which they enter their observations. They may be under-agents to some principal at Bristol.



THE point of the story is that we pacifists have not merely to have ideas of what Leviathan or other masses of our fellows should do but convictions on what one or two persons thinking with integrity and acting with enlightenment may achieve. Wordsworth had thought and spoken about politics as radically and fearlessly as most "young men in a hurry" are wont to do. And there had befallen him that moral disillusionment which we know so well today. The Republicanism of the village greens of France had become an atheism, a despotism, a militarism, a complete reaction, of which the crowning symbol was the coronation of Napoleon by the Pope. It was either despair or discovery that faced him.

And in the quiet of the Quantocks, amidst unlettered folk and the eternal goings on of country life, he found expression for new values, new language, new feelings, and a new centre of gravity, in the purposes and pathos of persons of which The Lyrical Ballads were the first publication. The ridicule and rejection of critics and the public drew from a friend a letter of sympathy to which he made the characteristic reply:

It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. . . . Merely think of the pure, absolute, honest ignorance in which worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images on which the life of my poems depends. . . . What have they to do with Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election, or the Borough of Honiton? . . . What have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares anything for except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and this with persons they care nothing for? What have they to do, to say all at once, with a life without love? In such a life there can be no thought; for we have no thoughts, save thoughts of pain, but so far as we have love and admiration.

It is an awful truth that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of

The Pacifist as Democrat

AN article of mine entitled **Anarchism and Democracy** which appeared in **Peace News** (Jan. 3 and 10) provoked a number of interesting criticisms. The subject is of some importance, and a few further reflections which may help to meet the objections raised in the correspondence column, may not be out of place.

The contention of the article was, briefly, that obedience to the dictates of the Sermon on the Mount, accepted in the letter as well as the spirit, involves not merely abstention from military service, but a total renunciation of the privileges of society secured by force: a renunciation of which Tolstoy offers the pattern. Such renunciation I called, perhaps rashly, "anarchism."

I contended on the other hand that there is nothing in the nature of conscientious objection as such which conflicts with the principle of democracy in England at the present day; and a pacifist may perfectly well remain a citizen so long as he does not base his objection on the injunction "resist not evil." He acts anarchically "only if he demands an unconditional exemption to which he has no democratic right, or refuses to attend a tribunal."

It was to this phrase that the first objection was raised. Mr. H. l'Anson Fausset pointed out (**Peace News**, Jan. 24) that under the present law a CO has as much right to unconditional exemption as to conditional. He was right, and I was wrong.

The ticklish questions relate to the correct attitude of the democratic pacifist who is refused unconditional exemption. "He may," I wrote, "consistently accept any alternative service that is offered him, provided it neither violates his reverence for the individual (as non-combatant duty might do) nor prevents him from propagating by word and example—against the war and on behalf of a new order of society. The service that gives him the greatest opportunity for such propaganda is the most to be desired."

To this I still hold, only I should like to enlarge on the implications of "reverence for the individual." Such a reverence, or respect for "the dignity of man," is, I believe, the inspiration of both pacifism and democracy in their Christian form. It is, moreover, the real source of that reluctance to join the RAMC experienced by conscientious objectors, many of whom are perfectly willing to serve with the Friends' Ambulance Unit.

This reluctance is intuitive; it can be defended in argument only by a reason that admits the validity of intuition. In this it is like the recoil of conscience from war itself. Yet quite a number of pacifists who can justify that recoil at the bar of reason, find themselves unable to vindicate their reluctance to do RAMC work. Vainly seeking a rationalization in the difference between helping soldiers and "civilians," they are seduced by the apparently irrefutable logic of the tribunal into conclusions as horrifying to themselves as to their neighbours. The conchie who "would not lift a hand to save a dying soldier" is pounced upon triumphantly by the press, eager as ever to prove pacifism the creed of irresponsible egotists, indifferent to all suffering save their own.

The truth is that the whole purpose of the RAMC as a corps is different from that of the FAU. The difference is much easier to sense than to formulate, as the CO soon discovers: and the old phrase about "patching men up again for the front," though true enough, is inadequate to it. Briefly, it may be put thus: the RAMC exists to deal with men as units, "gaps for filling"; the FAU to serve them as men.

The distinction may be "subjective"; the actual treatment meted out to a soldier by the RAMC may differ in no single instance from that which he would receive at the hands of the FAU (although I suspect that a difference of attitude does have its objective consequences): it is nevertheless vital. It is the distinction between treating men as means to an end, and treating them as ends in themselves: and in that lies the contrast between Christianity itself and paganism.

There is something sickening to the very soul in the spectacle of armies being sent out to the front with

retinue of doctors and nurses. These doctors themselves may be, and often are, animated by the highest motives of compassion and courage: so may the physicians have been who attended those tortured on the rack—they also were there to see that the patient did not die—but for what a purpose was he kept alive! They are a grim testimonial to the realism of generals and politicians: they at least, we feel, were carried away by no generous romanticization when they laid their plans for war.

ONE can understand the CO who refuses to perform non-combatant duties. But there are other circumstances in which he may feel compelled to refuse the conditions of exemption. I am thinking of those who experience an incontrovertible vocation for a particular kind of work. Whatever it may be, whether designing, or teaching, or preaching, it is the work to which they have been called by God, and through which alone they can serve man to the best of their abilities.

These, when ordered to take up agriculture or "social service" in the narrow sense, must and should resist. They are not mere individualists, a law unto themselves; they deserve all the encouragement and support we can give them. The fact that resistance will mean for them, not continuance in their trade, but imprisonment, or "the reproach of the Cross," is no argument against it. Jesus, too, might have gone on preaching on the shores of Galilee. The question of vocation is one that will, with the introduction of industrial conscription, face others besides pacifists. The defence of vocation is the only social purpose I can conceive for a "no conscription league."

What now is the position of the democratic pacifist who is forced to refuse the conditions of his exemption, and in so doing to break the law (for the law is that the verdict of the tribunal be obeyed)? Is he, as I said in my former article, obliged to "become an anarchist in order to remain a democrat": that is, to put himself as far as possible "outside society"? For he believes in the right of the majority to make the law—and, if the

majority wish it, to inflict penalties for his refusal to comply with it; while the anarchist denies that right.

I think Mr. Davey is correct. The pacifist who breaks the law on grounds of conscience need not put himself "outside society": for by breaking the law and accepting the penalty he is not infringing the rule of democracy itself. So long as he acknowledges the right of the majority to penalize him, or anyone else who disobeys its decrees, and makes no attempt to escape the penalty, he has a perfect right to go on accepting for himself all the privileges of citizenship—the privilege of imprisonment in particular.

IN short, a conscientious objector need never, in a democracy, feel obliged to become an anarchist in practice. But if he demands exemption from military service on the ground that one should "resist not evil," he must certainly must be an anarchist in practice and theory as well. I disagree most emphatically with Mr. Davey on this point. Mr. Davey declares that Government need not be "ordered violence," and therefore that if you accept the injunction "resist not evil" you need not follow the course of Tolstoy, forswearing the privileges of citizenship.

To this I can only reply that every Government of which we have knowledge is, among other things, "ordered violence": and it is utterly intolerable that pacifists should claim exemption on the grounds of obedience to that principle, and yet continue to enjoy the benefits secured to them precisely by the resistance to evil offered by the forces of the State. Absolutism necessarily involves anarchism.

Whether anarchism, in the sense in which I have used the term—that is, in the sense of a renunciation of the privileges of society secured by force—is a practical possibility in modern technological society, I leave it to the absolutist to decide. It is doubtful whether it is; and certainly it is impossible, as Dr. J. C. Jones pointed out (**Peace News**, Feb. 7), to renounce organized society altogether. But, so far as I know, no anarchist has ever desired such a total renunciation.

Anarchism does not imply primitivism—anarchism has nothing to do with anarchy. As Mr. Maurice Cranston observed (**Peace News**, Feb. 7), "withdrawal of allegiance from the present social order does not imply total isolation from all organized society—rather a transference of loyalty . . . to a new social order."

Even the Tolstoyan renunciation was no more than the obverse of a coin, the reverse of which was faith in a society wherein the administration of things had been substituted for the government of men. There is nothing to prevent a man from calling himself an anarchist who does no more than work for the realization of such a society, whether its advent be conceived gradually, as by Godwin, or catastrophically, as by Kropotkin. Anarchism of this sort does not necessarily involve absolutism.

GROUP NOTES

1937 — 1941

By JOHN BARCLAY

IT was in 1938 that we held our first AGM overshadowed by the death of Dick Sheppard. The report of the year was made by Max Plowman in a speech full of searching analysis and wisdom. It was the clarity and insight of that report which saved us from drifting apart; he gave us our bearings and warned us of the shoals before leaving to take up the task of editing **The Adelphi**.

We are now meeting for the fourth time. The whole position has changed since those early days, and from being an uncertain nucleus known as "Dick Sheppard's Movement" we have become a definite rock in the way of the "Rake's Progress."

The fact that the fabric is alive makes it able to withstand tremendous pressure without cracking. The only destruction we need fear is self-destruction. The prophetic vision of Dick Sheppard and Max Plowman foresaw the danger when they insisted on complete freedom of judgment for the individual within the movement—a movement based on a personal pledge. This freedom is our strength. Destroy it, or limit its scope by the introduction of rules, and we throw over the wisdom that gave us birth and the genius that made us different from the purely political or a-religious body.

The responsibility for progress must always rest on the individual; and it is from this that my optimism springs. All movements that attempt to impose their authority from above must finally perish; whilst those that have no vitality from within deserve to perish.

Newark-on-Trent. — "Under the tireless leadership of Sidney Gibbon, this small group continues a quiet but useful witness, closely collaborating with the MPF and maintaining contact with all isolated COs working in the district," writes Trevor Wadsworth, 112 Hawton Lane, New Balderton, Newark. "The challenge of the local War Weapons Week was accepted by issuing an appeal to every known Newark pacifist to make some sacrifice on behalf of the London PSU funds. Many responded, and £8 10s. was raised."

"Regular donations go from PPU and MPF members toward the maintenance of a Newark CO working with the PSU and to a CO relief scheme. Other recent activities include the distribution of copies of Roy Walker's blockade booklet, *Who Starves?* to prominent personalities believed not unsympathetic to this aspect of pacifist policy and the collection of signatures to petitions protesting against the BBC's undemocratic vetoes. Eighteen copies of *Peace News* are now sold. The group, which meets weekly, is studying Sir Richard Acland's book *Unser Kampf*."

Romford and Gidea Park.—The AGM of the Romford and Hornchurch Group will be held at Arbury Bank, Mill Park Avenue, Hornchurch, on April 27 at 3 p.m.

Ramsgate.—Following Roy Walker's visit, the group, acting on his suggestions, circulated various religious and political bodies in the town, endeavouring to enlist their support for the Hoover "Food for Belgium" scheme. At the same time it was suggested that a committee be formed to keep in mind the social welfare of the town with the object of securing a better order for the future. The result of this appeal was disappointing, only about 5 per cent. troubling to reply.

Women's Section

WOMEN & INDUSTRIAL CONSCRIPTION

By Dorothy Evans

BRITISH women are today faced with compulsory service as affecting their own lives. Pacifists have generally been found in the forefront of the opposition to conscription, i.e., compulsory military service. Women must now re-examine the basis of this opposition.

We would most of us concur in the view that the work of the nation should be shared equally among the citizens, and thereby all fit to work should find suitable occupation. There should be little, if any, difference in standards of living. The unpleasant drudgery and dangerous occupations could be performed by those declared fit for such work on the rota system. All this would require a considerable amount of government control and compulsion. As regards national killing and making the means of killing, however, pacifists refuse to be compelled and object to others being compelled. It is, therefore, to the type of service we object and not to compulsion as such.

There are many young women today who are ready to go to prison as witness to their objection to conscription for war work. They are concerned to find a way to make their conscientious objection known and to make it appear logical. To some a refusal to register appears to be the direct method; others, who already hold a food registration card, feel that, as good socialists, they should hold a work card also. They are determined, however, that they will not perform work which is more a part of the war than the work they are doing already. We cannot, as voting citizens, entirely escape the guilt of the national killing; we can only expiate the sin by putting forth our fullest efforts to turn our country toward the method of settlement by conference.

Philosophical anarchists might dissent from the above and deny implication in the crime of war. "Those who lead the good life need no laws," we are told. They need roads, however, and more and more services and amenities which it is practical and economic to use in common. Democrats, on the other hand, would seem to be under an obligation to accept any and every law, however bad they may think it, if it is made by majority decision.

The greatest common measure between these two extremes may be to have in the ideal State many more obligations on each of us toward the community and many more benefits: a multiplicity of laws, in fact, with a conscience clause to a great many of them. It has been proven in the case of vaccination of infants that those who have taken the trouble to study the subject and to avail themselves of the conscience exemption can safely be allowed to stand out without nullifying the whole law.

Women have claimed that a conscience clause should be included in the regulations for registration for war work. The demand now made by the nation upon young women is the equivalent of the military service demanded of men. On grounds of equality they claim the same recognition of conscience. They can establish their right by insisting upon making it, and no other, the ground of appeal if and when they are called up.

The Women's Committee has been asked by a number of correspondents for a clear lead, calling upon pacifists who are now required to register all to take the same line of action so as to demonstrate the total strength of pacifist conviction among women. We feel, however, that we can only put the various courses of action before those who ask for advice.

The claim for recognition of conscientious objection comes from those who put the authority of their individual judgment above that of the corporate judgment of their fellows. To these we cannot dictate any course of action; we must leave them to decide as to the limits of their conscientious objection and to take steps to state it as clearly as possible.

NEWS OF C.O.s

Firewatching Conference of "Hardship" Decision

Conference of F.C.O.

A DECISION which may perhaps be regarded as a test one on the matter of conscientious objection to fire-watching has been given in London.

R. J. Bell, 64 Hartfield Road, Hook, Surbiton, Surrey, indicated that he would not fire-watch on the premises where he works in the City, and applied to the Hardships Committee. The chairman of the committee first suggested that the application did not come within the grounds of exemption since there was no evidence of hardship.

Bell replied that to be compelled to do anything against one's conscience was a greater hardship than a compulsion to which one had no radical objection, and he put before the committee a statement indicating the view of the Home Office as given to Stuart Morris, who visited the Home Office on behalf of the PPU.

As a result, full consideration was given to the case, and Bell subsequently heard that he had been relieved indefinitely of the duty of fire-watching.

LEEDS ADVISORY BUREAU

Miss Edna Lees, 27 The Avenue, Alwoodley Park, Leeds, is secretary of the Leeds Advisory Bureau, and not Denis Riley.

Conscience and Conscription

(Continued from page 1.)

this and that occupation as a peace or war activity.

If one makes this approach to the problem, one can do no more than nail one's flag to a particular mast and stand by it. But I suggest that a very different approach to the problem is possible, and that there is a supreme call to the pacifist to make it.

The effective reply of the pacifist to the demands of total war is the creative life, the discovery, not in any office, nor in the mind of another, but in the depths of his soul, of a mission, of a task so absorbing and soul-consuming as to command unlimited heroism and sacrifice.

That mission, expressed in terms of those finer human relations which must be the foundation of any new world, few tribunals would be able to ignore or to reject. If they sanctioned it, the applicant would have the satisfaction of pursuing a purpose of his own choosing, and of fulfilling his highest mission, while if they rejected it, he would have something to fight and suffer for that was really worth while.

★

IN the conditions of today the pacifist ought to take a very comprehensive view of his responsibility, try to realize the deeper implications of his faith and the special service he is called upon to render to his generation.

He ought to accept the present war situation as the supreme challenge to all that he stands for, as an opportunity to exalt the values which alone are capable of saving civilization, and which, once embodied in living experience, will instinctively be acclaimed by man universally. It is not enough merely to refuse to fight: the pacifist must be in the vanguard of those who seek to create a society that has transcended the values from which war inevitably springs.

I am unable to become enthusiastic in the discussion of the relative merits of assembling bicycles, packing margarine, or printing capitalist newspapers, but if one can say, "Here is a good thing which I can do, a vital contribution which I can make to society here and now, and this thing I will do come what will, for all else is vanity and catastrophe," he has a clear case for carrying the demands of conscience to the utmost limits. In other words, it is a new positive that is required today, a way of life which can command sacrifice and endure persecution. Many conscientious objectors have discovered themselves and achieved a new spiritual synthesis in this war, and it may well be that a sufficient number of pacifists will yet have that experience to ensure that peace and the things that belong to peace shall arise from the ashes of this fast perishing civilization.

THE social significance of the CO in the resistance he is making to the efforts of the State to make civil and industrial robots of its citizens, was stressed by Fenner Brockway in a presidential address (read in his absence by the chairman, R. S. W. Pollard) at the national conference of the Fellowship of Conscientious Objectors last Friday and Saturday. He pointed out that the post-war world would be a world of State domination in the interests of the possessing classes unless a radical change could be brought about, and toward this end the resistance of the COs to totalitarian dictatorship was a valuable contribution.

A resolution adopted by the conference pointed out that the role of passive resistance to persecution which had been anticipated by COs had not materialised in the sphere of conscription for military service, but it was urged that COs should use the opportunities which were presented to them actively to promote the principles which have inspired them. The fundamental weaknesses of society which were among the main causes of war should be exposed and through the people they should seek to influence the peace.

WOMEN TO JOIN

A new constitution opened membership of the fellowship to persons

PROGRESS OF OUR CAMPAIGN

YOU can prove anything with figures, it is said. Be that as it may, I have some figures which clearly prove that a good deal of effort is being put into our sales campaign.

At the time of writing (Tuesday morning), for instance, more than 20,000 copies of the leaflet about Peace News have been ordered by groups and individuals, as well as nearly 200 of the advertising cards,

of both sexes who become subject to the application of any Act or regulation for military or industrial conscription that may be introduced and whose principles bind them together on the common ground of conscientious objection to conscription for war.

It was announced that the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors had now decided to treat the FCO in the future in the same way as other constituent bodies. Among other matters discussed was the need to maintain contact with COs who have left their own districts for agricultural work or through other circumstances.

BOROUGH COUNCIL'S DECISION

At a meeting of the Wimbledon Borough Council on April 8 a resolution was moved by Councillor Norman C. Edwards, a member of the Society of Friends and of the Peace Pledge Union, and seconded by Councillor H. W. Lewis, a Labour member who serves in the Home Guard. The resolution sought to rescind a previous decision of the council to discharge from their employ all conscientious objectors, Communists, Fascists, active members of the Peace Pledge Union, and "objectors to the conduct of the war against aggression by Germany." It was rejected by 22 votes to 2.

JOHN W. COWLING'S Circulation Notes

and a fairly large number of posters. Peace News seems to be getting some publicity!

As I expected, the leaflet is being used as the spearhead of the campaign. In one district copies are being enclosed in a church magazine; in another, copies of Peace News sold in the streets; in a third, house-to-house distribution is being tried, followed by a personal call.

The latter method may seem to involve too much time to be very attractive. But why not try, say, three "sample" roads? This can be done by a very few canvassers, and, if results justify the work, the method can be expanded to an extent commensurate with the helpers available.

Another statistical reflection of the campaign is in the printing order for last week's Peace News—19,000 copies. This does not mean that our circulation is up to this level, however, for some 400 copies were bought at the cheap rate, for use as specimens in connexion with the campaign.

This was, nevertheless, the largest quantity printed since the wholesalers' ban—with the exception of the Christmas issue. But it still means that we have more readers to find before we reach that 20,000 circulation—and we shall be satisfied with nothing less. Are you helping us to achieve it?

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YOUNG WOMAN pacifist wants full board accommodation, Cornwall (not town), June 3-14 inclusive. Box 746, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

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ANGLICANS or other "unchurched" pacifists with Evangelical-Catholic outlook desiring community life, send stamp; land and crafts scheme; daily Mass, Reservation; Ordination possible. Bro. Augustyn, 36 Harcourt Terrace, London, S.W.10.

MARKET GARDENER (pacifist) offers work to C.O.; capacity for hard work essential; a little capital an advantage. Burnett, Trevedna Water, Perranwell Station, near Truro.

Baptist Pacifist Fellowship

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 30. 2.30 p.m.

Kingsway Hall, London, W.C.2

Speakers:

Rev. Dr. E. K. Jones (Wrexham)
chairman, and Dr. Alex. Wood
(Cambridge)

Details of the B.P.F. from

Rev. G. Lloyd Phelps,
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Friends' Education Council, Friends' House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

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PEACE STICKERS, assorted, 1,000 3s., 500 1s. 9d., 200 1s.; packet stickers, Esperanto book, etc., 9d. W. J. Bridgen, 232 Sellin Court Rd., S.W.17.

QUAKERISM. Information and literature respecting the Faith and Practice of the Religious Society of Friends, free on application to the Friends' Home Service Committee, Friends' House, Euston Road, London, N.W.4.

VERA BRITAIN, Bill Grindlay, Patrick Wilson, Derek Savage, Dion Byngham and other well-known pacifist contributors in Spring issue New Vision, 5d. from 50, Langley Way, West Wickham, Kent.

MEETINGS

EWELL, Congregational Hall, 6 p.m., April 26; Geoffrey Pitcock-Buss, T. B. Scrutton: "War and Peace Aims."

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C.O. requires situation on farm, Home Counties; inexperienced agriculture; mechanic, driver, handyman. Box 743, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

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